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# The Decorator and Furnisher.

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IN carrying out decoration it will be found that all colors have three kinds of harmony—that is, harmony of analogy, as in the self-tones of a color, harmony of contrast, or of complementary colors, and harmony of related color, in which the varying proportions of the dominant color are mixed with another color, so as to produce a related contrast. For instance, we will suppose the walls of a room to be a soft green color, and that a carpet is required. Three methods are open to us; the carpet may be of a deep tint of the green, which is a harmony of analogy, or a warm maroon, which is a harmony of contrast, or a rich yellow brown, which would be a harmony of related contrast. There are six masses of color to be considered in living rooms: viz., the woodwork, the walls, the ceiling, the carpet, the curtains and the upholstery. It is by no means necessary that all these should have the same dominant color. The horizontal and vertical surfaces may agree—that is, the woodwork, walls and draperies, and the carpet, upholstery and frieze, while the ceiling may be treated independently.

IN all houses that are most delightful there is a reason for every color and a use and reason for each object. The woman who furnishes her hall in tones of red, or in yellows, and russets, and browns, and places dignified, substantial furniture there because she wishes to be in fashion, would be surprised to hear the finer reasons that the artist decorator has for the same selection. He first considers that the use of the room is temporary, and therefore not necessarily filled with furniture for lounging, that it admits one to the home, but not to the intimacy with one's tastes to be gained from a library or boudoir. It is a transition state, and should not be too sudden a change from the influences of nature to the effects of art. The characteristic difference between the decoration of a hall and that of other divisions of the house should be principally in surface and not in color. Difference of surface is secured by the use of materials which are permanent and durable in effect, such as wood, plaster and leather. These may all be colored without injury to their impression of permanency, although it is generally preferable to take advantage of indigenous or inherent color like the natural yellows and russets of wood and leather. When these are used for both wall and ceiling, it will be found that to give the necessary variation and prevent an impression of monotony and dullness some tint must be added in the ornament of the surface, which could be gained by a

forceful deepening or variation of the general tone, like a deep golden brown, which is the lowest tone of the scale of yellow, or a red, which would be only a variant of the prevailing tint. The introduction of an opposing or contrasting tint, like a pale blue in small masses as compared with the general tint, even if it is in so small a space as that of a water-color upon the wall, adds what an artist calls *snap* to the general effect, and enlivens and invigorates a harmony.

Perhaps no color carries with it a more appropriate influence at the entrance of a house than red in its different values.

Certain tints of it which are known both as Pompeian and Damascus red have sufficient yellow in their composition to fall in with the yellows of oiled wood and give the charm of varying but related color. In its strongest and deeper tones, it is in direct contrast to the green of abundant foliage and therefore a good color for the entrance hall or vestibule of a country house. If walls and ceiling are of wood, a rug of which the prevailing tone is red will often give the exact note which is needed to preserve the room from monotony and insipidity.

THE increasing use of the open fireplace is a healthy sign of the times, whether regarded from a sanitary or artistic point of view. More healthy than either the stove or the basement heater, it gives occasion for the display of decorative metal work, which is one of the most active and vital of modern furnishing tendencies. The open fireplace means, of course, a tiled hearth, with its accompaniment of fender, fire irons and fire screen. Fenders and fire screens are often made to match, a very beautiful combination being designed in brass, with rondels or bull's eyes of colored glass, which produce an excellent effect. Fire screens of colored glass are made in a brass framework, having panels of enameled glass in Persian or Japanese designs, and are exceedingly decorative.

THE Venetian glass of the present century is an extremely beautiful production, both in form and color, and quite equals in design and spirit of workmanship those old examples of Venetian glass made several hundred years ago, which were among the most valuable articles prized by the connoisseur. In table glass of this description we have claret jugs, liqueur glasses, preserve jars, flower stands, vases and so on, wonderfully light in weight, picturesque in appearance and cheap enough to compare with any table glass that has pretensions to artistic merit. The principal colors used are bottle green, ruby, amber, olive, and aqua marine, a very pretty sea blue tint, and the opal glass, which transmits a lovely iridescent light exactly like the precious stone from which it is named. The extraordinary shapes of Venetian glass are even more peculiar than its coloring. Some of the goblets are highly decorated with bosses of colored glass and conventionally shaped flowers. There is a delicately striped glass made into lily shaped bowls and dishes. Bubble filigree, of a delicate kind of ware, produced by joining two fine films of glass in such a manner as to leave bubbles distributed in a sort of diaper pattern over its surface. Extremely delicate water bottles are strengthened with delicate ropes of glass, and there are goblets with actual cords of glass wound spirally round and spreading outwards to form the feet. The manufacturers of this decorative glass are evidently moved by a higher motive than the mere trading spirit, for they offer the world the most unique and splendid of vitreous objects.

THERE are a thousand and one decorative objects that will serve to relieve the barrenness of many a blank space in our modern apartments, but the trouble is that they afford a ready means for overdoing decoration. We have often entered a small parlor in our city houses, through extremely heavy door hangings, and the first thing we stumbled over was a Damascus table, in trying to avoid which we fell up against a piano lamp. Moving in cautiously a step further, we came up against the sharp corner of an immense picture frame placed upon an easel, right in the middle of the floor, and in avoiding the monstrosity we overturned a pedestal supporting a group of Roger's statuary, which in the fall broke off the heads of two of the figures. The lessons to be derived from decorations of this kind are as follow:

Don't let the fashion of the hour override your common sense, not to speak of your taste and judgment, in arranging your apartments.

Don't put extra heavy drapery in small rooms.

Don't overload your rooms with furniture and bric-a-brac.

Don't place an easel, with a large picture thereon, in the middle of the parlor floor.

Don't place a large wooden pedestal, with a group of statuary, between the easel and the further corner.

Don't place upon a small table a delicate piece of Italian statuary, covered with a canopy of glass.

Don't have a big Chinese porcelain jar in a room only four times the width of the jar.

Don't use a table lamp of herculean proportions on a small table, or in a small room. Give the eye space as well as the lungs. Space in the center of the room is as precious as the most costly piece of furniture, for it enriches all the furnishings.

Don't hang your pictures with the top extending out from the wall, but let both pictures and furniture fall back flat against the wall as much as possible, leaving the greatest possible amount of space in the center of the room, so that the individuals who dwell in the apartment will be the real decoration, the furniture and bric-a-brac forming a necessary but agreeable and artistic background. Every apartment should convey the feeling of use, rather than the idea that it is a room for the exhibition of furniture.

IN these days of impatience and haste it is a very bad plan to be in a hurry about furnishing one's house. It is a bad plan to rely entirely upon the decorator's opinion without exercising one's own individuality and taste in the matter. The system of *How to Furnish a House in Three Days* is one that will surely destroy all ideas of artistic beauty, not to speak of comfort, in household belongings. Nothing is more dreary than the faultless drawing-room, where every picture and chair and cabinet and decoration has been carefully thought out from the first by the professional decorator, without any relation to the tastes and sympathies of the people likely to purchase same. One feels that they dare not exercise the slightest freedom without producing total confusion in the room.

On the other hand it must be admitted that individual taste is very often mere eccentricity, and if external dictation is bad, the hap-hazard methods of the newly rich are even worse. These people usually fill up their apartments with a conglomeration of objects, costly and beautiful in themselves, but totally out of harmony with each other, with the object of impressing on their friends an idea of their wealth.

Many interiors are ruined by the exclusive exercise of individual caprice. We know of an apartment where a Venus of Milo stands on a pedestal before a dark blue drapery, beside which on another pedestal, stands a ragged and highly colored figure of Don Quixote. Beside a beautifully painted tapestry on the wall is a water color, representing a box of cigars and a bottle of champagne and a glass, next to which hangs an engraving of the heads of horses in a race, the frame of which is a common, unplanned deal board showing the marks of the saw thereon. These are only a few of the many eccentricities of individual caprice, and another proof of the fact that no man who has his own business to attend to can know as much about this art of decoration as those who have made it their life work.

The best plan in furnishing is that the decorator should first consult the individuality of those who seek his assistance, and assist them in the purchase of articles that will, to some extent, represent the character and actual lives of the possessors. As the voice, the gait and the look of every human being is something quite unique, so their capacities of impressing themselves on their surroundings are severally different, and the whole value of their house furnishings lies in such differences.

People should not be like clay in the hands of the potter, and accept things that have no relation to themselves in any way, simply because such articles are in fashion. The best house decoration is the product of the union of the lay element with the artistic, and in choosing furniture it should be remembered that the delight of a really well furnished room is got out of the impression of appropriateness in the choice and position of everything. Everything seems to have a use—or at least to have been suggested by a use, and to be fitted exactly for the position it occupies.